

As the marchers started arriving at Clerkenwell Green, drunk and rowdy, Robin hissed, "Dave will charge me 85p." "No, he won't because I'll tell him otherwise." "It's my responsibility. What if you lose that money?"

The designated speechmakers were now trying out their bullhorns and others were cheering, laughing, waving and drinking.

COMRADS! COMRADS, EVERYONE, PEOPLE ... COMRADS, WE'RE GONNA HEAD STRAIGHT TO PENTONVILLE PRISON AS SOON AS WE'VE FINISHED HERE AND WE'RE GONNA BREAK DOWN THE GATE WITH A BATTERING RAM ... YES WE HAVE A BATTERING RAM IN A TRUCK NEAR HERE AND WE'RE GONNA START THE REVOLUTION RIGHT NOW ... YEAH ... you're dealing with party funds, you scab. You have no political awareness ... you're petty bourgeois ... SAVE ENGLAND FROM THE TORIES ... LONG LIVE IRELAND ... RUSSIA WE NEED YOU ... QUIET EVERYBODY HERE'S JIM CRANKCASE FROM THE MINERS UNION AND HE'S GONNA EXPLAIN WHY WALES WANTS THE REVOLUTION AND THE FREEDOM OF THE DOCKERS ... listen I'll take my 85p if I have to break your arm ... your 85p? That's a joke. I didn't see you kissing anyone ... right, and just wait till I tell Dave you virtually prostituted yourself, for one pee! ... what could I buy with one pee? ... LIBERATION, BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND COMRADS AND ALL RACES. WE WILL KNOW JUSTICE IN OUR OWN TIME ... WEST HAM RULE WEST HAM RULE ... SPURS RULE ... YES IT WILL BE CHEAPER TO GO TO FOOTBALL MATCHES ... I'm going home and I'm gonna throw you out, you whore! ... GREAT NEWS, COMRADS: THE PRINTERS HAVE JOINED THE STRIKE! ... not if I have any say in the matter ... FORWARD WITH THE BATTERING RAM ... NO PUSHING ... LONG LIVE THE PROLETARIAT ... A WARM THANK YOU FOR THE BAND

Robin and I took off in opposite directions, fighting our ways through fanatics and pickpockets and ruffians. I caught a bus going in the correct direction, but had to change to another bus, which I just missed, and Robin was standing on the platform scowling at me.

He got home before me and when I arrived there was my tablecloth spread in the front yard with all my clothes in the middle of it, and a cold stewy cup of tea and dry toast, with a note that said, "Thanks to you I missed the revolution."

PICKET LINE

We were all picketing and discussing filing for union strike benefits for our dependents with the union local boss. One woman had a dog with her and asked if he

counted as a dependent, since he ate a lot of dogfood. "I'll try for you," said the union guy. So I queried, "Can I get money for the roaches in my kitchen?" "Maybe," he replied, "but only if they join the picket line."

ARMCHAIR TYPES

It was a small room, but it was full of armchairs, and the strike meeting was about to start. I tried to get the most desirable armchair (the Russian-looking one nearest the radiator, since it was a very cold night) but was beaten to the plunge by a Trotskyite. Then I raced three Maoists to the comfortable oriental-decorated armchairs, but they were quicker, and meanwhile four pro-Irish WASPS sat down in the only clean green armchairs. A foul-smelling anarchist invited me to share his moth-eaten sagging black armchair, but I lost my balance and fell into the lap of a communist in a red, ungiving armchair, with a hardon, so I quickly got up again. Then I looked around to see all the armchairs were taken.

Since I was the only actual striker there (the rest were so-called agitators who'd enticed me with the promise of good beef stew), a middle-class feminist went on a special errand to get me a stool by the drafty door.

RED LABEL

When I was 15 in England I had a communist boyfriend and one night he took me to a Communist Party social gathering at headquarters. Walking into the place was like re-entering the womb: the walls were red, there were red flags, red books, red-dressed women and red men wearing workmen's clothes and red neckties. In fact it soon turned out I was the only non-communist in the place, and the Party Secretary, an Indian guy with teeth that stuck out sideways, said, "we're having a raffle in a minute and here's a free ticket. I think you should seriously consider getting involved in more of our party activities, a pretty young girl like you."

The prize in the raffle was a bottle of Johnnie Walker Red Label whiskey. I won it. And after five large swigs and a few giggles I joined up.